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Sermon on the Nativity of our Lord - 1837

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SERMON
ON THE
NATIVITY OF OUR LORD,
PREACHED IN
PAUL'S CHURCH, NEWBURYPORT,
A. D. 1837.
TO WHICH IS ADDED,
A SUCCINCT HISTORY,
OF
THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
IN
THIS TOWN AND VICINITY.

JAMES MOORE, D. D.
PUBLISHED.



Benefits of the Gospel.

S E R M O N ,

PREACHED

I N S T. PAUL'S CHURCH,

ON THE

NATIVITY OF OUR SAVIOUR;

DECEMBER 25, 1837.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

THE SUBSTANCE OF TWO DISCOURSES ON THE SUNDAY
FOLLOWING, BEING THE CLOSE OF A CENTURY
SINCE THE FIRST CHURCH EDIFICE WAS
ERECTED IN NEWBURYPORT.

JAMES MORSS, D. D.
RECTOR OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, NEWBURYPORT.

PRINTED BY
MORSS AND BREWSTER.
1838.



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At a meeting of the Wardens and Vestry of St. Paul's Church, held in the Vestry, Jan. 14, 1838 :—

VOTED, That John Dean and George Titcomb, Wardens, and Moses Merrill and Wm. Woart, Esquires, be a Committee to request of the Rev. Rector, a copy for publication of the Sermon delivered on Christmas last, and also a copy of the Discourses delivered on the Sunday following, on the rise and progress of St. Paul's Church.

GEORGE TITCOMB, Junior Warden.

TO JOHN DEAN AND GEORGE TITCOMB, ESQUIRES, AND OTHERS —

Gentlemen : — The discourses referred to in your vote of the 14th inst. are submitted for publication, in the hope that the good feeling and candor manifested at the delivery of the first, will not be diminished by the perusal from the press ; and that the record, contained in the other discourses, will be deemed worthy of preservation, and be transmitted to posterity as a memorial of the richly deserved credit and honor due to the early founders of this Church.

Affectionately yours,

JAMES MORSS.

January 24, 1838.

Jan. 18, 1902
m

S E R M O N .

ISAIAH, XXXV, 5 & 6.

THEN THE EYES OF THE BLIND SHALL BE OPENED, AND THE EARS OF
THE DEAF SHALL BE UNSTOPPED. THEN SHALL THE LAME MAN LEAP
AS AN HART, AND THE TONGUE OF THE DUMB SING.

SUCH is the beautiful imagery employed by the prophet in describing the influence of the gospel and the blessed effects of its general diffusion, on the state of mankind. The traits of poetic genius and effusions of genuine minstrelsy, which abound in the prophetic writings, will not suffer by comparison with the best models of classic literature. In purity of sentiment, loftiness of style and beauty of description they are not surpassed;—but in their power to elevate the feelings, purify the affections and move to good and noble deeds, they are not equalled by the most finished productions of Greece or Rome. The most beautiful works of the latter, grounded on the fiction of a golden age of pastoral innocence and happiness, which has passed away;—must yield in point of interest to the prophetic descriptions of a better age, yet to come;—presenting the heart-cheering prospect of improvements to be effected in the character and condition of man, and the happiness to be diffused, wherever the human race is found. This delightful transformation, to be effected by the influence of the gospel under the mild reign of the Prince of peace, is described under the figures of wild forests and rugged mountains converted into beautiful fields and fertile plains;—and beasts of prey tamed of their ferocity, quietly feeding in pastures beside the most innocent animals. Thus the prophet Isaiah, ‘rapt into future times,’ describing the reign of Messiah, breaks forth in the following strains. ‘Righteousness shall be the girdle

of his loins and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together and a little child shall lead them; and the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.' The practical effects of this moral change are expressed by the figure of the 'wilderness and solitary place being made glad and the desert blossoming as the rose:' the peaceful effects of religion on the barbarous customs of war are described by the "beating of swords into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks, nation no longer lifting up sword against nation, nor learning war any more; but sitting every man under his vine and fig-tree and none shall make them afraid:" and its transforming influence on the mind and heart is represented in the text by 'opening the eyes of the blind, unstopping the ears of the deaf, and causing the lame man to leap as an hart, and the the tongue of the dumb to sing.'

These striking images are used, not to entertain but to instruct; — not so much to please the fancy, as to enlighten the mind and mend the heart. A right understanding of them is therefore necessary, not only to a just perception of the pleasure to be derived to the taste, but to ensure their proper effect on the affections and conduct, and awaken just views of the excellence and value of that gospel, whose origin we this day celebrate.— In treating on the passage, to which your attention is invited, I shall proceed, 1st to explain the manner, in which this description of the benefits of the gospel is to be understood—2dly, illustrate the mode of operation, or the manner, in which its effects are produced—and close with a brief application.

I. By way of explanation, I observe, that the figurative language here used, is intended to express the *tendency* of the general prevalence, rather than the immediate effects of the first appearance of the gospel. Allowance is to be made for the peculiar structure of the Oriental languages, and of the Hebrew in particular; which is marked by laconic brevity and abounds in bold metaphors, and antithetic and weighty sentences; but destitute of that copiousness, perspicuity and precision, deemed so essential in modern compositions. Thus, in the psalms of David and elsewhere, it is implied, that righteousness is always attended by long life and temporal prosperity; when in fact the *tendency* only of it is meant to be asserted.— When Solomon says, 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it;' he means to assert the benefits of early education,—or in other words, that a good beginning is the surest way to a good ending; to which rule he does not mean to deny that there

may be exceptions. The glowing language in the text and other portions of the ancient prophecies is to be received with the same limitations. It was not intended to assert, that wherever the gospel was preached, or partially embraced, a miraculous change was immediately to be wrought on the whole community, or that the elements of the human character were to be supernaturally modified,—the primeval nature of our race changed,—the mass of depravity entirely removed from the human heart,—all the evil passions expelled, like demons, at its presence; or the darkness of reason immediately dispersed:—by no means; such expectations would be altogether unreasonable, and unwarranted by any fair interpretation of the language of prophecy. Men were still to continue rational and accountable beings, to exert the moral powers, to enjoy freedom, and retain the exercise of choice between good and evil; while the good effects were to be developed in the gradual extension, and ultimate, universal prevalence of the principles of the gospel over the minds and passions of mankind.

The apparent failure of its influence is therefore by no means to be attributed to any defect in its nature or tendency; but to the predominating influence of the corrupt passions of those, who openly reject, and the remaining corruptions of those, who partially embrace it. Even among nations professedly christian, the portion is small, which makes profession of their belief; and among even these, there are occasional marks of doubtful sincerity; while the best are called to struggle with remaining corruptions as well as the corrupt influence of surrounding example. — Were these impediments removed and the gospel universally embraced in truth and love, I do not say, that a state of perfect purity and happiness would ensue; for this is to be found only in heaven; — but an end would be put to the keenest sufferings of life, the judgments of God would be withdrawn, war and bloodshed would cease; and such a disposition to allow the undisturbed pursuit of the lawful concerns and pleasures of life, and promote mutual happiness, would prevail, and such an amelioration of the condition of man produced, as would amply justify the figurative language in the text.

The same happy results will not always be experienced by individuals or nations. Allowances are to be made for the peculiarities of individual and national character. Greater obstacles are to be encountered by some than by others. The gospel will shine in full lustre only among the civilized and enlightened. Christianity is far from being hostile to the advancement of light and knowledge, to the highest degree of intellectual and moral refinement, to the progress of science or to cultivation and urbanity of manners: on the contrary, its genuine influence is best displayed in the highest stage of human refinement, and its best fruits are pro-

duced on the most cultivated soil. Hence every allowance is to be made for the previous condition of the subjects, on which its genial rays are first to shine, and its ameliorating influence to be first exerted. The darkness of ignorance, evil habits and unsubdued passions, will in all cases obscure its lustre and tarnish its beauty. Our Saviour himself has taught, how essential a good soil is to the yielding of the good fruits of religion.—The seed is always good, but the heart needs culture. All the recipients, then, are not to be brought to the same standard; good fruits in equal abundance are not in all cases to be expected; improvements must vary according to talents bestowed and opportunities enjoyed. By this rule, we are taught, that judgments both here and hereafter are to be awarded. If the christian virtues and graces are all to be sought, where no advantages of early cultivation have been enjoyed, the search will be vain; and if judgments are to be made up by this rule, few will abide the test. Perfect uniformity of temperament, disposition and manners among christian professors is in the nature of things impossible. Even among the chosen Apostles, the companions and family of our Lord, there was a variety of disposition and character. There was the disciple, who on account of extraordinary meekness and sweetness of disposition was termed, ‘the beloved’; and there was the bold and zealous disciple, who betrayed many infirmities, and was often subjected to the severe reproof of his Master. Neither the mildness of John was charged with coldness, nor was the zeal of Peter a peculiar or infallible evidence of sincerity; but both were true disciples, although the latter had to grapple with more evils of corrupt nature, while the former was best beloved, and displayed with less effort a larger share of the genuine fruits of religion: while the desire, the unwearied effort, the prevailing motive of both were the same. Were these dispositions universal, — were all men *thus* to become christians, and strive to bring forth the good fruits of their profession and ‘high calling in God,’ the blessed influence of the gospel would be realized, and the charming sight witnessed, as figuratively represented by ‘the lion and the lamb lying down together, the eyes of the blind being opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped, — the lame man leaping as an hart and the tongue of the dumb being made to sing.’

II. Let us then proceed to show its mode of operation, or in what manner it produces these beneficial effects.

1. The subjects of divine grace were once blind; but they now *see*. — They were born in the darkness of the natural man, which is corrupt, and ‘were by nature children of wrath, even as others.’ Their spiritual vision was blinded by carnal lusts and passions, and they had no right discernment of spiritual objects. They ‘put evil for good and good for evil, light for darkness and darkness for light;’ and viewed the requirements

of the law with dislike and abhorrence. They saw great difficulties in the way of religion, strong objections to faith in the revealed will of God, whom they regarded as 'a hard master, reaping where he had not sown and gathering where he had not strawed.' The whole scheme of the gospel was enveloped in obscurity, and darkness rested upon the great deep. But now the views are changed, and they are ready to exclaim — '*one thing I know, that whereas I was blind I now see.*' The vail is taken off, and they behold with joy the deep things of the law. Sin appears in its true colours, altogether loathsome, destructive of human happiness and therefore opposed to the will of God. All his acquirements appear to be reasonable, the truths of his revealed will worthy of reception, and the observance of the institutions of religion, a reasonable and delightful service. 'Old things are done away, behold all things are become new.' — The word of God is their richest treasure and communion with him in his ordinances, the source of the truest enjoyment. From the sacred volume they derive the most valuable instructions; in it they find the image of themselves faithfully portrayed; they discover their disease and remedy; forsake their own self righteousness, as a filthy rag, fly for dependence to the merits and sacrifice of their Saviour; and desire to be clad in the robe of his righteousness as their only recommendation to divine favor. They see and admire the excellence, the dignity and sufficiency of Him, on whom their help is laid. His power and authority engage their confidence, his love captivates and fixes their hearts. They see the vanity of the present state and fix their affections on things above. 'In these respects, they have all of them a good understanding; however inferior in natural capacity or acquired knowledge, to the wise men of the world.' Every one may not be alike conscious of the process, but all agree in the beauty and excellence of religion; all have a lively consciousness of the worth and importance of piety and virtue, and feel a strong and hearty desire to be conformed to the will of God as displayed in the image of his dear Son.

2. Because they *see*, they *hear* likewise; their ears are unstopped. — Once they were deaf to the notes of the silver trumpet of the gospel; their ears were 'like the deaf adder, who would not hear the voice of the charmer, charmed he never so wisely.' They could not endure the doctrine of dependence; the cross was an offence; — and even the joyful songs of angels over a lost sinner recovered, was no music to them; — it was fatal to their hopes, and the death-knell to their own boasted merits — but now since their change, the chords of their hearts vibrate to new emotions; no song, so sweet, as that of Moses and the Lamb, that was slain from the foundation of the world; — no theme is so interesting or conveys such delight, as that of the scene on Mount Calvary, — no voice is so cordially

listened to, as that, 'which invites the sinner to Christ;—'his blood speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.' They are no longer mute in prayer and praise :— their ears being unstopped, their tongues are also loosed ; they can no longer be dumb and silent spectators of the worship of God ; but their hearts are ready to flow out in the channels prepared for them ; and they feel, that if *they* should be *silent*, the very *stones* would cry out. — The services of the sanctuary are their chief refreshment, — and their obligations, motives, resources, encouragements and prospects, all combine to animate them in their christian course, and impel them to press toward the mark for the 'prize of the high calling of God.'

3. 'Having their sight and hearing thus restored, and their hearts enlarged, they walk at liberty in the ways of wisdom.' — *the lame man leaps as a hart*. Some christians seem to have been healed, — but have never moved ; have been cured of the leprosy of sin, but have not 'taken up their bed and walked.' The true christian commences actively the path of duty and his feet make haste to keep the commandments of God. Instead of creeping, as before, in a state of hesitation, 'groping for the wall like the blind, as if he had no eyes, and stumbling at noon day as in the night,' he is enlightened by the sun of righteousness and the path of duty is plain and easy before him — so clear that 'the way-faring man though fool cannot err therein.' Instead of halting between two opinions, he is satisfied as to the Master, whom he should serve, and it becomes his delight to do his will. Instead of being at a stand, as to the main object of pursuit — whether it should be honor, or power, or wealth, or fame ;—or whether he should forsake Christ for the world, or *all* for Christ ; he is settled — his object is marked, he keeps heaven in view and looks above the world and tramples its pomps and vanities beneath his feet. Of his great object he never loses sight ; as a pilgrim and sojourner here on earth, he marches forward to Immanuel's land, 'to fairer worlds on high.'—Not slothful in business — not walking in the ways of the wicked, his feet not running to evil or making haste to shed blood, or following the multitude to do evil, — he is always found at the post of duty ;—walking in the straight paths of truth and justice, — visiting the sick and afflicted, distributing to the necessities of the poor, and scattering blessings by his presence in every direction. Past experiences are subjects of gratitude, but not of trust ; nor is his hope of salvation grounded on any thing that has already taken place ; nor does he place the least reliance on any present attainment ; like the Apostle Paul, he does not consider himself, "as having already attained, or as being already perfect — but 'one thing' says he, I do 'forgetting those things that are behind, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God ;' and again, says the same, 'I therefore *so* run, not as uncertainly ; *so* fight I, not as one that beateth the

air, 'but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection,' lest after having preached to others, I myself should be cast away. His whole life is a warfare—a continued struggle with sin: like the sun in the heavens, he never stops in his course, nor ceases to bring forth the good fruits of religion, in order to keep *hope* alive: and thus he proceeds from strength to strength; running, and not being weary, walking and not being faint.'

4. And, finally, his limbs being restored from the palsy of sin, as he proceeds, he joins in the voice of creation, shouting the praise of its Creator. — 'The tongue of the dumb shall sing.' The whole world was formed to show forth the glory and sing the praise of its Creator; and the mighty voice which spake it into being, was reechoed by 'the morning stars, which sang together.'—All was created to display his wisdom, his goodness, his power and to diffuse joy and gladness throughout the realms of his dominion. One only being witnessed with grief, and conspired to destroy the noblest part of creation; and one act only was therefore necessary to complete the splendor, and perfect the glory of the Creator;—and that was, *the work of redemption*. This was planned in the same Council, which said, 'let us make man after our own image, in our own likeness'; and accomplished 'in fulness of time' by the adorable Son of God:—who condescended to become man—'and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin';—to suffer and die to make atonement for our sins, to accomplish our redemption from the captivity of sin and satan, to reconcile and restore us to God and raise us to a state of indescribable happiness. Thus was the glory of the work of creation rendered complete by that of redemption; viewed with admiration by the blessed spirits, who kept their first estate—made the subject of prophecy and song, among patriarchs and prophets,—and in the fulness of time, ushered in by hymns of joy from the angelic choir. 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will towards men.' Catching the strains of the melody of heaven the believer unites in anthems of praise and thanksgiving;—commencing on earth the ceaseless song, to which the harps of angels are strung in heaven—of 'glory to God and the Lamb, who hath redeemed us by his blood—and made us kings and priests unto our God.'

Such, my brethren, is the happy result of grace in the heart;—such the duty and privilege of the believer,—such the nature and effects of religion. It first removes obstacles and then proceeds in its delightful and delighting course;—it clears away rubbish, and builds the splendid edifice;—it cuts down forests, and turns them into beautiful gardens; at its approach the arid sands become fertile fields, and the barren wastes are converted to rich pastures;—it feeds the hungry,

opens the eyes of the blind, unstops the ears of the deaf, — causes the lame to leap like the hart and the dumb to sing for joy. Its very nature is pleasant, and its leading object is to banish evil, and diffuse happiness. But these blessed effects are to be the result of its universal diffusion. When every man embraces the gospel in the love of it, we confidently predict the arrival of that state, described by the figures of ancient prophecy; 'when the wolf shall dwell with the lamb; the desert shall blossom as the rose, and swords shall be beat into plough-shares and spears into pruning hooks, and men shall learn war no more.'

1. We learn from hence the true nature of the gospel, — its transforming power, — its wonderful efficacy in changing the nature and condition of man. It commences with the heart, the fountain of sin, which it cleanses and causes to send forth the pure streams of righteousness; it makes the tree good, that the fruit may be good also. — It is in its nature altogether remedial. Its object is to restore man to the primeval condition, forfeited by sin; and revive the image defaced by the apostacy of the pair in Eden. A new birth, is necessary to this restoration to God and happiness. This is to be accomplished through the instrumentality of a *covenant*, of which Christ is the Mediator. We are by nature 'truce breakers' — heirs of a broken covenant; which is to be renewed, by entering into the bonds of a new and everlasting covenant, sealed mystically in the ordinances, of which Christ is the surety and sacrifice; but entered into and ratified spiritually in the inward man.

The gospel is not given as an improved code of ethics, or as a better scheme of morals, by observing which we may attain salvation. — Its chief operation is on the inward man; it is not our external doings that are to save us, but the merits and sacrifice of Christ alone, applied by faith. Christ came, not to proclaim the doctrine of immortality; for this was known before; — nor to establish a new rule of life and conduct; for the best of moral precepts were contained in 'the law,' and revealed to the Patriarchs; being neither altered nor enlarged by any new discoveries in the Gospel. Nor was it his purpose, *chiefly*, to proclaim the doctrine of future rewards and punishments; — for this was the universal doctrine of all religions, Jewish and Gentile, except a small number of mistaken interpreters of the gospel system. He came not to 'destroy the law, but to fulfil,' to show its spirituality and power; and to purify it from the traditions, by which, in the hands of a corrupt priesthood, it had degenerated into a dull round of formal rites and ceremonies. He came to fulfil the law and make it honourable; — 'to bring life and immortality' to clearer 'light,' and by his resurrection from the dead, to assure us of our own. — Look at his instructions; — they inculcate the law of love, which pervades the Old Testament. The writings of the Evangelists are not

books of morals, but histories of the life and doctrines of Christ. The book of the Acts is the history of the foundation of the Church ; the Epistles are addressed to various churches, for the prevention of heresies and divisions, and the promotion of love, peace and harmony among the various branches : — to which are occasionally appended, supports under persecution, encouragements to perseverance, and exhortations to such a line of conduct, as best became their profession. The great subjects — the sum and substance — the central point, from which all their writings diverged, were faith and repentance, — the indispensable conditions of the new covenant, — by which alone all its benefits were to be secured.

2. We learn the immense value of the Gospel ; — its beneficial effects in the promotion of benevolence and peace ; and in inspiring confidence between man and man ; — rendering not only life but property, as safe in the keeping of a fellow being, as in our own ; — in a word, accomplishing all, that the most selfish heart could wish, — or the wisest head devise, to promote the peace and welfare of man on earth, as well as in heaven. And, because it has not already done this, shall it be abandoned ? Shall those evils which the craft and subtlety of the Devil or man have wrought, be alleged against it ! Shall the abuses of unbelievers, or weak professors be deemed a sufficient reason for consigning it to ignominious oblivion ? Shall its progress be stayed ; and because to this generation it has not been developed in all its splendour, shall we impiously attempt to extinguish its light and cut off hope from all succeeding generations ? What are its evils ? What age or nation has it visited without the cup of blessing in its hand ? On what period or portion of the world has it alighted, from which at its approach preexisting peace and happiness fled ? In what age or portion of the world were the passions of men, without its aid, kept in due subjection, and the whole aspect of society preserved pure and unblemished ? If there are none, — if no such place or period is to be found, if its footsteps are marked by no evidence of mischief — then let it have free course and be glorified ; — let it accomplish the work, for which it was designed ; let us welcome its approach, speed its onward march, swell the ranks of its favoured followers and pave the way for its universal triumph.

Finally. What hinders its progress ? The obstacles are many. The divisions, strifes and animosities of christians are among the most influential. Alas, my brethren, how fearful is our responsibility ! Who can wash his hands and say he is innocent ? But the universal prevalence of pride, lust, avarice and ambition are the chief and most potent. — What a barrier is thus erected by blind and guilty man against his own interest ! How vast the multitude, thus leagued in hostile array against the messenger of heaven, which, in the course of his triumph, are to be swept away by the besom of destruction ! But christians themselves are not duly aware of the dignity and importance of the christian charac-

ter, as disciples and followers of the exalted Redeemer—‘as heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. Theirs is the greatest of all attainments—the loftiest of earthly honours. In this light has its ‘time honoured name,’ ever been esteemed and revered; gathering freshness, as it has advanced in age. It was in high repute even among those, who doomed its professors to the stake; who beheld with admiration and reverence, the firmness, the constancy, the courage, of these innocent victims, and their elevation above worldly considerations; and regarded them as a new race; and their joy in suffering, as a new phenomenon—an entire exception to all the known principles of human action. At the sight, vast numbers were converted; the very means used to arrest, served to accelerate the progress of religion, and ‘the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church.’ And such will be the result of a faithful and just exhibition of its features and character. Let christians then bear this in mind;—keep in view the responsibility of their station and endeavour to shine as the lights of the world. Let them consider, that from them the beauty and excellence of religion are to be reflected; and on that image its success in the world must in a great measure depend. The genuine influence of the Spirit will then be abundantly poured out upon the church, and the way be speedily opened for the spread of the Redeemer’s kingdom throughout the world.

In the birth of the Saviour then, one and all may rejoice. The hardened sinner only can be insensible to the testimonials of joy on this occasion. If any are anxious for the spread of unbridled licentiousness, let them this day be mute; for to them these tokens of joy must carry dejection and despair. If any are anxious to wield the sceptre of lawless dominion, and bind on the people the yoke of oppression,—let them be mute; for on this day the ‘eyes of the blind are opened’; ‘liberty is proclaimed to the captive and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.’ But let the righteous rejoice; for the kingdom of Christ is come, which is their protection and safety;—let the sons of true prosperity rejoice; for He, who is the chief portion of their inheritance is the King, whose reign we celebrate;—let the penitent sinner rejoice; for here he beholds the Lamb, whose blood cleanseth from sin, and whose sacrifice alone can secure pardon;—let the poor rejoice, for here he finds true riches, even ‘the unsearchable riches of righteousness;’—let the sick rejoice, for here he finds the remedy for all his spiritual maladies, and while his outward man decays, his inward man is renewed day by day;—and let even the dying rejoice;—for this day opens the portals of Heaven and awakens the undying hope of a blissful immortality.

A
BRIEF HISTORY
OF
THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
IN
NEWBURYPORT AND VICINITY;

BEING
THE SUBSTANCE OF TWO DISCOURSES
PREACHED IN
ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, DEC. 31, 1837.

1ST EP. JOHN, I, 3.

THAT WHICH WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD DECLARE WE UNTO YOU, THAT YE ALSO MAY HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH US: AND TRULY OUR FELLOWSHIP IS WITH THE FATHER AND WITH THE SON, JESUS CHRIST; AND THESE THINGS WRITE WE UNTO YOU THAT YOUR JOY MAY BE FULL.

THE Gospels and the Acts of the apostles were published for the purpose of making known to the Church the foundation of faith, and instituting rules and presenting examples for the guidance of the practice of future generations. — A leading object was to preserve the great principle of 'the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace'. — Historical narrative is the form of instruction best adapted to excite interest, preserve the connection between the distinct and otherwise discordant members, and to serve as the bond of union between successive generations. The order and harmony of the whole are thus preserved entire, and the identity of the church militant is secured to the end of time; or until the second coming of its Head. One characteristic feature pervades the whole body; which is, mutual fellowship, or communion in doctrine and practice; and the fundamental principle of this union and communion of saints, is 'fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ' — or communion in that faith, by which this mutual relation between the Father and the Son is effectually recognized.

This general and comprehensive purpose of Church-history is sufficient authority for narratives of the smaller portions or members; of which the use and advantage need not now be particularly argued. As this day closes the year, and a century, since the first Church was erected on the spot, on which this edifice stands; I propose to give a brief sketch of the

events relative to the origin of the Episcopal Church in this place, and the more prominent circumstances, which have attended its growth and progress to this day.

The narrative of a body of christians, differing from the popular and prevailing customs and creeds,—emerging from the midst of deep prejudices; surrounded by strong opposition,—yet springing up and laying the foundation of a work, which has survived to this day, is still flourishing and holds out bright prospects of future success,—cannot fail of being interesting and instructive.

The doctrine, whether well grounded or not, that our fore-fathers fled from the persecutions of the Church of England, was faithfully transmitted; and inculcated, as an infallible and fundamental article of faith; and the wrongs done them were painted in glowing and exaggerated colours. Hence it may well be supposed, that an attempt to introduce branches of this Church into this country, would be regarded with surprize, and meet with opposition. A few individuals, dissatisfied with the disordered state of the churches around them, finding themselves involved in a labyrinth of difficulties, and apprehending still greater yet to come, set themselves to work to investigate the causes and discover the remedy. A slight examination of the ecclesiastical history of New England will be sufficient to show, that in less than a century, the churches had fallen into a state of the wildest confusion: and were divided into numerous sects, inflamed with mutual hatred and animosity. No ecclesiastical history of any country exceeds this in instances of extravagance of opinion or variety and discordance of practice. Synod after Synod was assembled to devise remedies and bring order out of confusion. Having embarked on a new system of church-government, in which they had neither guides to follow, nor precedents in antient or modern times, as patterns to work by;—and being obliged to grope their way through new and untried scenes, and to deal with spirits, not the most tractable, it is not to be wondered, that they should be driven into wild schemes and rude experiments,—which, instead of relieving, served to render the theory of discipline more perplexing, and the practice inconsistent with public professions; that arbitrary will should take place of rule, injurious to the rights of private individuals; and a wide difference prevail between general professions and particular practices. The inevitable consequences were, a relaxation of discipline, the decay of religion, neglect of the sacraments, and general prevalence of the wildest notions on the one hand, and of irreligion and infidelity on the other.

This state of things excited the compassion and awakened the attention of the pious and benevolent in the Mother-country, to devise some method of relief. The result of which was, the formation of a 'SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF RELIGION IN FOREIGN PARTS,' incorporated in 1701; which was piously patronized and liberally endowed by the Clergy and Laity in every part of the kingdom, and partook largely of the royal bounty. By it Missionaries were sent to various parts of the world and to this coun-

try in particular; and facilities were afforded for disseminating a knowledge of the scriptural worship and discipline of the Protestant Episcopal Church. In Boston and one or two other places in New England, where individuals of sufficient intelligence and influence resided, this Church had been planted; from which it found its way to this place.

Newbury, having been early selected as a convenient site for ship-building, the seeds of the Church were probably first sown by those, who came from abroad for this purpose. But the first decisive movement was said to have originated in a difficulty about locating a new meeting-house, about to be erected. The final decision of this question not being agreeable to the persons living in the vicinity of the Plains, and the Merrimack River, their attention was turned to the forming of an Episcopal Church.

This determination created a strong sensation throughout the State, occasioning evil surmises and violent opposition; and called forth from some leading men effusions of no very gentle or amiable spirit. Dr. Colman, the Minister of Brattle-Street, Boston, in a letter to Dr. Kennet, Bp. of Peterborough, dated Nov. 17, A. D. 1712, gives the following account of their proceedings.

'The last year a difficulty happened, in Newbury, about placing their Meeting house. The matter was brought before our General Court, who determined according to the free vote and act of the Precinct, whereby they had obliged themselves to each other. Whereupon a number declare themselves for the Church of England; many of them I will suppose persons of sobriety and virtue, and only in a pet and to save their rate to their aged and worthy Minister, Mr. Belcher, *utterly ignorant of the Church they declare for*, nor offended in the least with the form of worship or discipline, which they had observed. They were most narrow and rigid dissenters, who would before this have disowned me in particular for the use of the *Lord's prayer, reading the scriptures and a freer admission to the Lord's supper* than has been generally practised in these churches.*'

This explanation of the conversion of these episcopalians may have satisfied the writer of this letter; but the events proved their convictions to have been deeper and more lasting; and they gave clear and conclusive evidence, that they were influenced by reasons more weighty than pecuniary considerations; that they had something of higher importance in view, than to 'save the rate;' that they were guided by light, which perhaps the Doctor needed; and so far from being 'narrow and rigid

* The Bishop probably smiled in his sleeve, while perusing the good Dr's reasoning. It seems that the use of the Lord's prayer and the reading of the scriptures in public, were not in good repute. 'Thereby hangs a tale.' Brattle street Church was suspected of leaning to episcopacy, and wished their Minister elect, Dr. C. who was then in England, to receive congregational ordination there, before he assumed the charge of the parish in Boston; — and it was a condition of his office, imposed by the parish, that the Lord's prayer should be used and the scriptures read on occasions of public worship.

dissenters,' they were men of enlarged views and feelings, — of a determined spirit and willing to abandon 'narrow and rigid dissent,' for a more liberal and enlightened faith. They proceeded at no small hazard and expense to erect a building, which, tradition says, was immediately demolished during the night by some of their opponents. — It was soon however rebuilt, and called Queen Ann's Chapel;* and to prevent the repetition of similar injury, they addressed a petition to the Governour for encouragement and protection.

This petition contains doubtless a more accurate and satisfactory account of their convictions and feelings, than that just quoted; and as it comes from themselves, is more to be relied upon; while its truth has been confirmed by the result, and their sincerity established by their adherence to the cause they had espoused, until death.

'To his Excellency Joseph Dudley, Esq. Capt. General and Governour in chief in and over her Majesty's Province of the Massachusetts bay in New England, — the humble petition of several freeholders, and the inhabitants of the town of Newbury.

Whereas your Excellency's petitioners have declared themselves members of the Church of England and have raised a building for the worship of Almighty God, according to the manner of service prescribed in the said Church, We humbly desire your Excellency's Protection and encouragement in our just and laudable Undertakings. We are convinced that the Church of England is a pure Orthodox Church, and so are resolved to continue no longer in that [unreasonable] separation, [and schism] which has so unhappily prevailed among the mistaken and prejudiced inhabitants of this country. This resolution has occasioned ye illwill of our Dissenting brethren, who levy upon us more than Ordinary Rates towards the maintenance of their Minister, and other purposes of that nature; which act of theirs is a very great hardship and grievance to us, since we have addressed Our Right Rev. Diocesan ye Bishop of London to send us a minister, which we shall most gladly receive; but think ourselves under no obligation to any Other; — it being a thing unknown in her Majesty's dominions, yt ye members of the Church of England are obliged to contribute to the support of the Dissenting Teachers. We therefore pray your Excellency's favour, that we may not be molested for the future upon this account and beg leave to subscribe ourselves

Your Excellency's Most Dutiful

and Obedient Servants —

Abraham Merrill, Joshua Brown, Richard Bartlett,† Daniel F. Law-

* It was 50 feet long and 30 feet wide and stood on the Plains; the site is now used as the burying ground.

† The words enclosed in brackets are nearly illegible, having been intentionally obliterated.

‡ The children of these two families were baptized April 18, 1714.

rens, Samuel Bartlett, Samuel Sawyer, John Bartlett, Robert Rogers, Joseph Bailey,* Richard Williams, Ephraim Davis, Josiah Sawyer, Benjamin Sawyer.

There is no date to this document ; but from the answer of the Governour, it must have been drawn up in February 1712. This is probably a duplicate of the petition actually sent to the Governour, as it does not contain the same number of signatures, expressed in the Governour's answer.

The following is a copy of the reply :

BOSTON, Feb. 28, 1711 — 12.

I received yesterday an Address and Petition, signed by 22 persons, Freeholders and Inhabitants of the Town of Newbury, setting forth, that they are declared members of the Episcopal Church of England, as by law established, and that they have rayed a building for the service of God according to the Manner of worship prescribed in the said Church, Desiring Protection and Encouragement therein accordingly, and that they have addressed the Right Reverend the Bishop of London to have a Minister sent to them, and that thereupon they may not be obliged to contribute to the subsistence of the other Ministers of any other profession, as at large is set forth in this Petition.

I am also further informed by the Reverend Mr. Harris, one of the Ministers of the Church of England in this place, that at their desire he has visited and preached to that new Congregation, and had a very considerable auditory, and that he shall continue so to do, untill their said address to the Lord Bishop of London shall be considered and orders given therein. — I am thereupon of opinion, that the said Petitioners and others that joyne with them Ought to be peaceably allowed in their Lawfull proceedings therein for their good Establishment ; and ought not to be taxed or Imposed upon for the support and Maintenance of any other Public Worship in the said Town. — Of which I desire all persons concerned to take notice accordingly.

Given under my hand,

J. DUDLEY.

To her Majesty's Justices of the Peace
for the County of Essex, Massachusetts Bay, }

From the above it is abundantly evident that for at least a year previous, the subject of episcopacy had been agitated among them. It had been carefully weighed and examined, and the result was, the conviction of at least twenty-two freeholders, men, as Dr. Colman admits, 'of sobriety and virtue'; — who had invited the Rev Mr Harris of Boston to

* His children were baptized April, 1723.

visit and officiate among them, and had requested their Diocesan, the Bishop of London, to send them a Minister. All this had the appearance of deliberate enquiry and full conviction; and gave evidence that in the course of their proceedings, they were actuated by an enlightened conscience.

In answer to their application, the Rev Mr Lampton was sent as the first Minister of this Church, A. D., 1711; but did not stay long, having contracted a bad state of health* — There are a few records supposed to have been made by him — ranging from 1711, to 1714.† — The precise duration of his ministry cannot be ascertained. The following letter from Gen^l Nicholson, appointed Agent by the Queen for examining and reporting on the state of the churches, renders it probable, that his short residence here was subject to a temporary interruption. It is addressed to the Church at Newbury.

PISCATAQUA, July 31, 1714.

Gent. — The great fatigue of my business together with a long indisposition is the reason I have not visited you. Mr Lampton is come once more among you, and as I have hitherto used my Interest, so you may depend upon the continuance of every thing in my Power for your services both here and in England.

I am gent. your affectionate, &c.

FF. NICHOLSON.

Mr Lampton probably continued here until the autumn of 1714, and was succeeded by Rev HENRY LUCAS, in the summer of 1715. Here we have another proof of the zeal and constancy of these men; — not discouraged by disappointment in the loss of one Minister by indisposition, they immediately applied for another; and had interest and influence sufficient to procure one within a short period. The letter of Lieut. Governour Nicholson also shows in what consideration they were held. The original letter of introduction brought by Mr Lucas from Mr I. Bridger is still in being, of which the following is a copy.

LONDON, March 20, 1715.

The bearer hereof Mr Lucas is appointed your Minister, and I have no reason to doubt, but he will fully answer your expectation, and advance

* Humphrey's Memoirs.

† The first recorded meeting of the Vestry is in Mar. 30, 1714, at which Abra. Merrill and Joshua Brown were chosen Wardens. Eleven persons were baptized during his ministry.

the Church amongst you to the praise and glory of Almighty God and to the edification of many souls; and if he does his duty, you must do your parts.

As I have not made so great progress in my own affairs yet as to say that I shall return to New England again, yet nothing shall be wanting on my part, that shall contribute the smallest mite to your church's benefit and your prosperity herein.

Mr Lucas has given me his word, that he will do all that in him lies to promote true religion by a strict and virtuous life, whereby the Church will be much increased;—by which he will disappoint our enemies both in their desires and expectations. Heartily praying for your health and prosperity in all kinds, I remain &c.

J. BRIDGER.

The earliest record made by Mr Lucas* is a baptism Oct. 1715—probably made not long after the commencement of his parochial duties. Dr Humphrey, Secretary of the Society in Eng. gives the following account of him: 'His congregation was but small at first, the people having lived long in a disuse of the sacraments they still continued negligent of them. Mr Lucas, not only by public discourses advised them and used his best endeavours in private to convince them of the usefulness and benefit of both those ordinances. He used also to go to Kittery a neighbouring place and preach there; he had a large congregation, several times near 200 persons, who expressed a mighty desire to be instructed in the principles of the Church of England. He baptized here many children and seven grown persons, one of which was 50, the other 60 years old.'

Mr Lucas seems to have been an ardent man, of quick sensibility, but of a morbid temperament, and liable to deep depression. The parochial records of his time appear to be imperfect, and made by different hands. The last is the baptism of 'James, son of James and Dorothy Lucas, born March 22, 1719,—per me, Hen. Lucas.'—It is probable that, from this period till the time of his death, his health was infirm and declining.—He died suddenly 23 Aug. 1720, said to have been occasioned by suicide, in a fit of derangement. He was buried on the 25th, under the altar of the church; but there is no stone to mark the spot, nor any means of determining his age. His widow with her children is said to have returned to

* His recorded baptisms amount to 31.—The baptisms in other places than his own parish, are not recorded.—The first baptism recorded in his Church is Henry Lunt, son of Skipper and Elizabeth, April 11, 1714,—by Mr Lampton.

England. The time of his ministry occupied about 5 years. The Rev Mr Mossom of Marblehead officiated here occasionally, until the arrival of his successor.

The Rev MATHIAS PLANT, the third minister, succeeded him and commenced his labours in April 1722.

Mr Plant at the commencement of his duty, Nov. 1722 drew up 'articles to be a standing order, by which the Parishioners shall proceed for the good Regulating and ordering of the Affairs of the Church for the future, and that nothing should be allowed or added to them without the consent of the Minister;' which were signed by the following persons :

Samuel Bartlett, Abiel Long, John Bartlett, Joseph Annis, Joshua Brown, Skipper Lunt, Josiah Sawyer, Benjamin Long, Steven Rogers, Ephraim Davis, Thomas Bartlet, James Harbutt, (William Somands,) John Eayre, Robert Rogers, John Merrill, William Morey, Richard Williams.

These names are in their own handwriting and are all written in a fair legible hand, with one exception, marked as above;— thus indicating them to have enjoyed advantages of early education, and to have been above the common class of freeholders.

Secretary Humphreys thus speaks of Mr Plant. 'He was appointed Missionary A. D. 1720. He was received with much favour and civility by the people of the Church of England. He began to discharge his ministerial office with success; many people showed a great earnestness for the Public worship and more continually were added to them. *They contributed their equal rates* very frankly to Mr Plant, and he was so sensible of their favour in many respects, he makes this grateful acknowledgment of it to the Society: 'I find both my people and others the inhabitants very kind to me, and although my place is reckoned the smallest, I must confess the love I have for the people, and the truly good will and extraordinary civility and kindness, I receive from them, makes me to esteem my place as inferior to none.' Mr Plant continues now (1723,) in this mission; his congregation now amounts to near 200. Some of his hearers come from towns 4, 5 or 6 miles distant and their number is daily increasing.'

Mr Plant had not been here long, before he began to experience some proofs of '*the religious freedom, which our forefathers came here to establish,*'—in renewed attempts to tax episcopalians for the support of congregational ministers. The Episcopalians agreed to defend their own rights, resist the payment, and divide among themselves the expenses incurred by law-suits. They then applied to Governour Shute for protection and obtained from his Excellency the following mandamus —

Boston, July 27, 1722.

Whereas upon information from the Rev Matthias Plant, minister of the Church of England, Newbury, that several persons of that and the adjoining towns have professed themselves members of the said church and accordingly have entered their names in their register-book, and that the Rt Rev the Bishop of London hath settled a minister among them and that there is a very considerable congregation; I do therefore order, that the persons, who have already declared, or shall hereafter declare for the said established church, be peaceably allowed in their proceedings, and must not be taxed or imposed upon for the support and maintenance of any other public worship in the said town or towns, wherein they shall inhabit: of which all persons concerned are to take notice accordingly.

Given under my hand,

SAMUEL SHUTE.

To his Majesty's Justices of the Peace
for the County of Essex, or any one of them. }

The Episcopalians under this protection proceeded harmoniously for several years in the enjoyment of their Minister and their privileges. — The subject of the new church at the Water side, (as it was then called,) appears to have been first agitated about this period. This part of Newbury was become the centre of population and business. In 1726, a congregational church had been collected here and placed under the pastoral care of the Rev Mr Lowell. Several active and enterprizing Merchants of this place; — among whom we find the names of Atkins, Dalton, Harris, Brown, Jenkins, Gwynn, Cottle, Woodbridge, Davis, Smith and others, who were Episcopalians, were desirous of a place of worship, more conveniently situated than that at 'the Plains.' This was necessarily attended by considerable difficulty, and out of it grew some uneasiness between Mr P. and his parishioners at the Water-side. The people at the Plains had a prior claim to Mr P.; and the only course left for the other portion was, to obtain a separate minister; — or consent to divide the services between the two churches, and make M. P. minister of both. — To this there were objections on both sides; — each parish supposing it necessary to have the services of its own separate minister. It was hardly supposeable that the Society in England would be willing to divide the mission, and support two missionaries. The object, then, could be effected only by negotiation with Mr Plant; and they believed that it could be best accomplished by making him Minister of both churches and obtaining his consent to appropriate a portion of his allowance to an assistant: — upon the probable presumption, that by the

increase of the two sections, both ministers would ultimately derive adequate support. After considerable discussion, there appears to have been a tacit understanding, by which Mr Plant was to be chosen Rector, and his concurrence was given to a division of his stipend from the Society in England:—but there appears to have been some hesitation on both sides in the final adjustment.

During this state of affairs, the Church, called St. Paul's, was built A. D. 1738. — Of its rise and progress Mr P. gives the following account in a letter, explanatory of the difficulties, before mentioned, to the Rev Mr Bearcroft, Sec. of the Society in England, where he says, that he had not been here more than 2 or 3 yrs. before the late Gov. Wentworth of New-Hampshire informed him of unfavorable feelings towards him in consequence of his not acting in concert with the plan of building a new church. Many years after this, he observes, 'Joseph Atkins, Esq. as we were upon a journey together proposed to me the building of a Church by the Water side. I answered, it was a new thing and required time to consider: but in about half an hour, this answer was returned, 'I don't know but it will do very well.'—Then he said he would give £50 towards it, and I proposed to give the same sum. Here was laid the foundation of a new church by the water side; then the land was bought, subscriptions took, a frame bought, hewed and time fixed for raising it, &c.'—This letter is dated July 10, 1745: on the same date he writes, 'Then I called a meeting at the new church, delivered them the Bible and Common Prayer-book, sent out by the society for that Church. and a record was made of it in their book, signed Anthony Gwynn. Capt. Marquand was absent.'*

The New Church of St. Paul's, although raised A. D. 1738, appears not to have been sufficiently finished for public worship until near the close of 1740.† After a good deal of discussion between the parties concerned, and an unavailing correspondence with the Society in England on the part of the members of this Church, (informally conducted, as Mr P. intimated,) the following instrument was agreed upon, signed and delivered.

NEWBURY, Feb. 3, 1742.

We the subscribers, members of the New Church in Newbury, called by the name of St. Paul's Church, desiring the worship of God according to the Rubric of the Church of England, do desire and do make choice of the Rev. Mr Matthias Plant as our Minister to officiate and carry on this said worship in said Church of St. Paul's, in Newbury aforesaid—in

* This record is found in the records of St. Paul's church, signed as above stated.

† It was not entirely finished inside until 1746.

witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands this day and year above written.

MICHAEL DALTON, }
EDMUND COTTLE, } Church Wardens.

Signed by ten others.

After this arrangement, he preached at stated times in St. Paul's until the following November; when it appears that this instrument had become a new source of dissension: regret was expressed at their having given it to Mr P.; and he gave notice of this new state of uneasiness to his own parish at the Plains; and of his determination, by God's assistance to perform divine service there for the future every Lord's day.— This took place Dec. 20, 1742. The instrument was in consequence delivered into the hands of Commissary Price, and cancelled, April 21, 1743.*

* During this period of trouble with St. Paul's, the members of Queen Ann's Chapel sent to the Soc. in Eng. the following testimonial of their love and respect toward their Minister.

To the Rt. Rev. Rt. Hon. and worthy Members of the Society for propagating the Gospel, &c.

We think it our bounden duty to return our hearty thanks for the unparalleled favour we have long received from your generous bounty in continuing a Missionary amongst us for upwards of twenty years.— Accept, we humbly pray you, of our hearty thanks; let not our remissness be an occasion of our punishment, we do esteem it (under the providence of God) a Great Blessing and desire the continuance of it—Our present minister Rev. M. Plant was sent over to us in the year 1721; and hath to our great comfort continued with us ever since. May God grant him a long life with us, and he merits our best wishes and thanks; and truly we have been exceedingly happy under his prudent and vigilant care of us.— There has never happened in the length of time, any disputes and contentions;—but a perfect series of tranquility has been our portion;—and we are peculiarly happy in this respect, that as we love and honour our Rev. Minister, so he reciprocally rejoices in the good will and favour of his people. Though our number may not equal some congregations, yet we can vie with any in the sincerity of our thanks; and we do with one heart and voice pray for the continuance of that Ven. Society, whose pious endeavours do so greatly tend to propagate real christianity in the world; and may the same merciful God, who first put it into their christian hearts to send us a Missionary, still incline you towards us is the hearty prayer of

Your Honour's most obed. serv'ts.

SETH BARTLETT, }
EHUD BARTLETT, } Church Wardens.

New Eng. Newb. Oct. 4, 1743.

[Signed]

Joseph Annis, Abel Huse, Joseph Annis, jr., Jn. Bailey, Abel Huse, jr., Joseph Annis, jr., Jn. Eayr, Israel Bartlett, Christo. Annis, Skipper Lunt, Joseph Coffin, jr., George Worthen, Jos. Sawyer, Benj. Coffin, T. Bartlett, Jos. Sawyer, jr., Batt. Boulton, Wm. Currier, Dan'l Allen, Joseph Whitmore, Moses Merrill, Thos. Bartlett, Joshua Sawyer, Enoch Bartlett, Jn. Bartlett, Gideon Sawyer, Isaac Morsa, Benj. Long, Wm. Huse, Isaac Freese, Steven Rogers, Enoch Davis, Benj. Willet, Moses Sawyer, Benj. Davis, John Hook.

In July 1745, Mr P. wrote a long letter to the Society, justifying himself from the charge of having failed in fulfilling the agreement to allow £20 or £30 sterling toward the support of a separate Minister at St. Paul's. He considers the difficulties to have arisen in part from their refusal of induction to him as chief minister of the Church; and of his right to choose the Senior Warden. In 1747, a document was drawn up agreeably to directions received from the society, purporting to be a bond allowing £20 toward the salary of an assistant; but the claims of the members to invite into or exclude from the pulpit whom they pleased, presented a new obstacle to the adjustment. This claim Mr P. firmly resisted, as materially interfering with the rights of the Clergy, and the discipline of the church; and was resolved never to admit it. This protracted the difficulty until the year 1751;—during which period, there was a consultation in Boston between Messrs Marquand and Roberts of this church—and Drs Cuttler and Caner, of Boston, on the subject of sending over a candidate for orders, whose name is not mentioned. A Mr Wingate is also spoken of as having this object in view; but afterward declined. At length in June 24, 1751, the terms for settling this dissension were agreed on, the *independence* of the Gent. at the water side was relinquished, and Mr P. was legally inducted into the Rectorship of St. Paul's Church.*

In the minutes of his occasional labours in St Paul's Church during the period of this dispute, he takes notice of the smallness of the audiences, composed of 10 or 12 men and of 2 or 3 women; and on one occasion he mentions 7 men and 1 woman; probably owing in some degree to the existing state of irritation. During the same period, he enumerates, as

* In consequence of which he penned the following letter to the Secretary—dated

DECEMBER 23, 1751.

Rev. Dr.—In a letter I received from you, bearing date of October 21, 1747, sent by Mr McGilchrist, and received by me March 25, 1746, I am there recommended upon my being the Chief Minister of the whole parish of Newbury, to make good my promise of paying annually £20 sterling to some young candidate, when admitted into holy orders, to be my assistant at St Paul's Church in Newbury. The Proprietors having given me Induction into the said church June 24, I, to comply with the society's directions, have made choice of Mr EDWARD BASS, the bearer hereof to assist me in the said office, when admitted into orders, promising to pay Mr Bass annually £20 sterling, according to the true purport and meaning of the society's directions in that affair; humbly praying the society to recommend Mr B. to my Ld. Bp. to be admitted into orders, that he may as soon as possible return to my assistance, who now labour under a weak disposition. Mr B. came to me so well recommended that I verily believe he will be of service in the church and especially in Newbury, the place designed for his residence.

M. P.

belonging to Queen Ann's Chapel, 50 Communicants and from 150 to 200 stated hearers.*

Mr Plant appears to have been a man of strict integrity, and of a high sense of decorum, and of the distinctive rights of the Clergy and Laity. He was exact and methodical; punctual in the discharge of the duties of his station; and anxious that Clergy and Laity should each move in their distinct sphere, without interference. It had been intimated to 'the Society' that he had sometimes appeared in public not suitably habited according to the Canons;—which he resents, as a groundless charge, averring that he had not even attended the funeral of a child 'without his bands'—though he had been obliged to ride some miles to attend it. In his difficulties with the members of St. Paul's, there appear to have been some important principles involved, which he resolutely defended.—These were connected with the Minister's right to control the concerns of the church within the limits of his particular mission, which the members of St. Paul's seemed disposed partially to contest; but which deviation from order, the Society in England would not sanction. Though disposed to encourage the new church, the Society made it a condition, that his authority should be recognized, previous to relinquishing the sum, proposed for an assistant. Amid the angry feelings produced by the controversy, it may not be doing injustice perhaps, to Mr P. to suppose, that he was somewhat too distant and unrelenting; and that the reluctance felt at dividing his stipend, caused some unnecessary delay in the final adjustment. Still he deserves the credit of having retained a right, which, it

*His private records contain the following notice of an Episcopal church at Amesbury, in the copy of a letter to Dr Bearcroft, (probably 1745.)

Rev. Dr. — You will not think it amiss, if I inform you, that I have a pretty Church at Amesbury on the other side of Merrimack River. I gave a calf towards a dinner for the men who raised it, and £5 this currency for nails towards shingling it. I was going to send for glass to England for it; but this unhappy quarrel — (probably with the people of St Paul's) arising, I forbore — but it is worthy the notice of that Venerable Body. — I have preached there for many years, in a house, before the Church was built, and since in the Church, where I also had a numerous congregation.
M. P.

The names of Sam'l Weed and William Pressy are recorded, as having conformed as early as 1716, Edw'd Young, of Salisbury, Sept. 26, 1720. May 21, 1722. Mr Nichols, George Worthen, of Amesbury, Mr Leyden, of Salisbury, — declared themselves for the Church. Also, Ephraim Buswell, May 14th 1722.

Mr P. has left a notice of the following description — which needs explanation.

'I have 12 acres to the use of my church which I have been in possession of for many years.'

appears, the Boston Clergy had been obliged partially to relinquish.* — His regard also to the welfare of the portion of his flock, worshipping in Queen Ann's Chapel, — as he foresaw there might be some collision between the two churches after his death, deserves approbation. But for the change in the political affairs of our country, the effects of his wisdom and forecast would have been evinced in the present flourishing condition of both churches.

He was highly respected by his parishioners and by other denominations; although he had to pass through scenes which required extraordinary prudence and firmness. — He kept aloof from the strong excitements of the day, produced by the earlier visits of the Rev. Mr Whitefield, — the propriety of whose movements was doubted by many of the orthodox teachers among other denominations, and afterwards by himself. While other parishes lost a large share of the members, he says, that not one of his flock deserted the church.†

* History of Stone Chapel, Boston, by Rev Mr Greenwood.

†His own zeal for the distinctive doctrines of the church was manifested at a visit to Gov Belcher in Boston, on one of the Princess's birth-days. — 'Several gentlemen being personally attending, we all then present were invited to dine with the Gov. His Excellency says to Capt Atkins, When did you see my mother Partridge? how does she do? Capt A. replied, I saw her on Sunday in the afternoon at Mr Lowell's meeting. Says the Gov. 'you call ours the *Meeting-house* and yours the *Church*; but you should call ours '*the church*' and yours *the meeting*. — The Gov then added, when I was in England, I waited upon Viscount Townshend, and talking of the state of the church in N. E. says his Lordship, I suppose you call the Church people Dissenters there, and yours the Church; as we here call ourselves the Church, and you, *Dissenters* — so that *we are the church* and you *Dissenters*, says the Gov. — Dr. Harward, the Assistant at the King's Chapel, being my senior, I waited to see what answer he would return to his Excellency's speech; (resolving it should not want an answer.) Every person present being silent, and Mr Harward and Esq. Atkins, the only two persons of the church, — being seemingly thunderstruck, — I thus addressed myself to the Governour. May it please your Excellency, I do not know, what my Lord Townshend may say to you in his chamber, nor what his opinion was in his study, but if he expressed himself in these terms to your Excellency his opinion was in direct opposition to the Lords Justices, who in their letter to Lt Gov. Dummer, ordered their Secretary to inform him, that they had no regular establishment of any church in this Province; neither have you, says I to the Gov. any other establishment, but what is on the *same footing with the sectaries*, viz. the Act of toleration. I went on very warmly for two or three minutes; but the Gov. put a stop to me by saying, Mr P. 'I shall not dispute the affair with you;' nor 'I with your Excellency.' When Mr Harward and myself returned from the Gov's house, I asked him, whether he took notice of the affront he attempted to put upon two Clergymen in their habit. He said, 'yes.' I asked him, why he did not give the Gov. an answer? He said to me, — I do not give myself any trouble about such things; I dine with him often, and do not feel disposed to dispute him, &c. — You can't help

He did not long survive the peaceful arrangement with St. Paul's. — He had contributed generously to the expense of building it; subscribed £ 50 toward it; given the glass — and the dinner at the raising, — and paid £60 toward liquidating its arrearages. He paid as he thought, full one eighth part toward the whole expense. He died on the 2d April 1753, aged 61.*

Rev. Mr EDWARD BASS, the fourth minister, a native of Dorchester, Ms. and graduate of Harvard University in 1744, succeeded the Rev. Mr Plant. At the invitation of the members of this Church, he went to England for orders; and on the 24th May 1752 was ordained by the Rt. Rev. Thomas Sherlock, D. D. Bishop of London, in his Chapel at Fulham, and in the Autumn of the same year, took charge of St. Paul's Church, Newbury. — In 1789 the University of Pennsylvania conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity. In 1796 he was elected the first Bishop of Massachusetts, and on the 7th of May 1797, was consecrated in Christ-church, Philadelphia, by the Rt. Rev. William White, D. D., Bishop of Pennsylvania, Bps. Provost and Clagget being present and assisting. On the 27th, he was received and acknowledged in the most affectionate and respectful manner by the Clergy of his Diocese, then assembled in Trinity Church, Boston. The States of Rhode-Island and New-Hampshire soon after placed themselves under his jurisdiction.

The earliest record remaining of St. Paul's is dated Nov. 22, 1741; and is an account with Michael Dalton of debt and credit, — on which date he gives credit for £2, 10s. 2d. — by contribution; from which it is

yourself, if they do say so of you; what signifies it to you to show your resentment? They do not in Eng. mind us that are here — I then said to Mr Harward, I am sorry you are tied so fast by the teeth, as not to resent such a designed affront as this was; for my part, I'll eat bread and cheese, so long as I live, before I'll sneak to the Gov. for a dinner and at his table hear myself called a Dissenter and my church represented a Conventicle.'

* He married Miss Lydia Bartlett, daughter of Mr Samuel Bartlett, Dec. 27, 1722. She died Oct. 8th 1753, aged 66. They left no posterity. She left an excellent character — being a notable housewife, — and able, to adapt herself to all classes of society.

A simple stone of slate marks his grave, with this inscription :

Here lies buried
the body of the Rev Mr MATTHIAS PLANT,
born in Staffordshire in Great Britain,
Minister of this Church, and Rector of St. Paul's;
Obit. Apr. 2, 1744. *Ætatis* 62.

He built a neat dwelling house, pleasantly situated on the Merrimack, near the present Essex Mer. Bridge — which was afterwards occupied as an Almshouse, and has since been removed; a portion of it is still remaining on the old situation.

appears, the Boston Clergy had been obliged partiall-

His regard also to the welfare of the portion of hi

Queen Ann's Chapel,—as he foresaw there r'

tween the two churches after his death, de-

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The first meeting for the choice of Wardens and Vestry is dated 1745; at which Capt. Daniel Marquand and Anthony Gwynn were chosen. — The following vote was passed October 27, 1749. That the said Church Wardens, viz: Wm. Atkins and Thos. Woodbridge, should write to the Rev. Mr Quincy, (who had preached in said Church and now in Boston) to invite him up to preach in said church; — for which service it is agreed to give him Eight Pounds Old Tenor per week and pay his board. In Jan. 1753, a meeting was held and a committee chosen, consisting of Capt. Michael Dalton and three others to build a porch and front gallery; also the same year, another meeting was held to settle the accounts of the church and rate the pews, to meet the outstanding debts; — the best pews were rated at five shillings per Sunday, Old Tenor. The members of St. Paul's were at the expense of building their church, keeping it in repair, — raising £40 toward paying the salary of their Minister, and paying his house-rent, in order to be entitled to £ 30 from the society in England, or this moiety of the sum allowed for the mission at Newbury.

Mr Bass commenced his labours in the autumn of 1752 and Mr Plant died in April following. Of the reception of Mr B. or the particular mode

* On the list of contributors to the Church in addition to the above, are the names of Mr Plant who gave £50 and afterwards added £60 more; Thomas Smith, Capt. James Simmons, Capt. Butler, William Jenkins, John Mace, Robert Barrott, John Webster, William Green. — The Joiners contracted with, were Eben and Nathan Little. The Masonry was done by Ephraim Blaisdale.

tion, there is no record. He recorded the burial of Mr P. on the 1753, and his general records of baptisms, &c. commenced the first notice of the Minister is to be found in the records the proprietors voted to pay to the Rev. Edward Bass £225 to be raised by subscription. This was probably raised in addition of £60, allowed from England. During the same year the Organ bought of Charles Apthorp, Esq. of Boston, Treasurer of King's Chapel. This organ was the oldest in New England. An altar-piece appears to have been received at the same time. The old organ was taken down and a new one placed in its stead, Christmas 1834. — The old organ was placed in the Vestry, and afterward sold for the use of the Chapel of St. John's Church, Portsmouth.

Mr Bass, officiated in Queen Ann's Chapel once a month, till 1766. — At a meeting of the proprietors, that year, it was 'Voted, that whereas, £ 6 sterling hath been kept back from the Rev. Edward Bass on account of his attending Queen's Chapel one Sunday every month; and whereas he has now done attending on said chapel, that the Church-Wardens pay the Rev. Ed. Bass six Pounds sterling above the twenty four Pounds, which they usually paid; and also Voted that the Church-Wardens collect six Pounds from all those who attend the public Worship at Saint Paul's Church wherever they belong.' The Church at the Plains being thus deserted, soon went to decay, and in about ten or twelve years after was blown down. — The materials were left to the disposal of those, who were inclined to appropriate them to personal or other use. The furniture had been deposited, by a Vote of the Vestry, in the hands of Mr Joshua Bailey, till called for. The pews were used to finish the gallery of the adjoining Meeting-house. The bell, with the following label on it, 'presented to Queen Ann's Chapel by the Bishop of London,' is now in the belfrey of the Belleville Meeting-house. The christening-bason, which is of silver, is in the possession of St. Paul's; but the Bible and Prayer-book have disappeared.

From this period to the separation of the Colonies from Great Britain, and the dissolution of their connection with the Bishop of London, to whose Diocese they were attached, the annals of this church appear to be marked by no events of deep interest. The Rector pursued the regular course of his ministry in the bosom of his flock, and in the reciprocity of mutual esteem and affection. The congregation was composed of a portion of the most respectable inhabitants of the town; and the intervening period is distinguished by the names of Atkins, Dalton, Tracy, Marquand, Hooper, Jackson, Harris, King, Roberts, Jenkins, Woodbridge, Balch, Cutler, Rand, Coffin, and others; who took an active part in its concerns. This was the Augustan age of the town. There may have been since, more wealth and a larger population; but there has been no period, more distinguished for urbanity and politeness, and the free exer-

cise of social intercourse. The revolution, which proved fatal to the fortunes of many, and produced considerable changes in the community, has not yet restored the affability, courtesy and sprightliness of that period. No observer can help noticing the change, by whatever cause it may have been produced. The all absorbing subjects of patriotism, liberty and independence, have prevented a regard to the more trifling concerns of personal comfort and social enjoyment. Occasional effusions of this lofty, patriotic spirit occasionally broke in upon the peace and quietude of the Church; and a few sacrificed their religion to their politics, and seceded from the church, because prayers were offered for their supposed enemies. The uneasiness became such, at length, that the Wardens and Vestry requested the omission of the prayers for the Royal family, as a measure necessary for the preservation of the church. With this Mr Bass complied, at the risk of incurring the displeasure of his employers abroad. His situation was one of extreme difficulty. Although bound by the oath of allegiance to his king and of obedience to the Church; yet he felt all the ties of kindred and country; and the sacrifice of personal comfort and of foreign obligations, seemed to be demanded by the pressing exigency of the case, by the success of religion and the superior call of his country and his home. He therefore yielded to necessity and cheerfully endured the personal privations which he knew must follow. His connection with the Society was thence forward dissolved, and he became entirely dependent on his parish for future support.

THE CONSEQUENCES of this compliance on the part of the Minister were, the quieting of uneasiness among the dissatisfied members, and the uninterrupted performance of public worship, agreeably to the rites and ceremonies of the Episcopal Church, during the turbulent scenes of the revolution. The principal reasons assigned by the Society for discontinuing the missionary services of Mr B. were, the opening of his church on a public fast appointed by the civil authority, and taking up a contribution for the relief of sufferers in what was called 'the rebellion;' to which it was viewed as giving countenance. His services were therefore discontinued, and the remittance of salary withdrawn. He complained to the Society of this act, and endeavored to convince them of the propriety of his proceeding: but they remained deaf to his reasonings and inexorable to his entreaties. This might be thought a hard case; and by some, deemed a sufficient reason for abandoning the church. It would be so, if mere expediency had been the sole or chief reason for being a Churchman. But there was a wide difference between the excellence of a cause and the mismanagement of its concerns; and no good man will abandon truth, because he sustains inconvenience in its support. Much however

may be said on both sides. The Society no doubt considered themselves as having good reason for the course they pursued : but this is not the place to settle this question.

The benevolence of Mr Bass, and his readiness to perform deeds of charity had not conduced to ease of circumstances, although his family was small ; he was therefore severely pinched by the change. But in these times, 'which tried men's souls,' he willingly bore his part in the common calamities. At the close of the war of the revolution, the Episcopal Church was left in a hazardous condition. Disjoined from the Mother Church ; — the members detached from each other, with no visible bond of union, — exposed to the influence of crude speculations and errors, which began to abound and prevail, — and highly excited by the spirit of liberty and independence, which at times seemed verging to licentiousness ; — it appeared quite doubtful at first, whether the conservative principles of the Church would be sufficiently operative, to collect the dissevered members ; or whether the bond of peace and unity had survived the shock of civil and political strife, with influence enough to collect and bind the scattered fragments into one compact body. The experiment was made, and thanks be to God, and the blessed influences of his Spirit on the hearts of its members, — made with success. With one mind and heart the members looked around for the moving Spirit which was to restore them to order, and 'compact them by that which every joint supplieth.'

To understand the difficulties attending the position of the Church at this period, it should be known, that in its former state, it was an integral part of the Church of England, with the Bishop of London as its visible head ; from which, by the separation of the Colonies, it was civilly dissevered ; and so far as it had any legal existence, could be known only as the American Church, or the Episcopal Church of the United States. — But its organization was incomplete : it had no visible head ; being destitute of that order in the ministry, to which the jurisdiction of the churches in general, and the conveying of holy orders in particular, had been originally committed, from the days of the Apostles.

Candidates for the ministry had therefore been sent from this country to England, for ordination ; and were there, first ordained Deacons, and then Priests, before their return. On this account, the order of Deacons had become less known and understood in this Country. It became necessary to supply this defect and obtain the consecration of suitable persons, as Bishops for this Church. The suggestion at first created some alarm among the other denominations ; but it was discovered in the result, that Bishops were quite harmless. Dr. Seabury was first sent from the State of Connecticut. But the Canons for consecrating Bishops in England requiring some modification for such a juncture ; he deemed it

inexpedient to wait the tardy process of parliamentary enactment, and obtained consecration from the non-juring Bishops in Scotland. The difficulties in England were afterwards removed; and Drs. White of Pennsylvania, Provost of New York, and Madison of Virginia, were consecrated by the Most Rev. John Moore, Archbp. of Canterbury, and other Bishops assisting. The apostolic succession was thus completed, and the American church regularly organized.

St. Paul's Church, in this town, being composed of men of enlarged views and extensive influence, was early active in its efforts to aid in accomplishing this organization. But among these efforts, the elements of order and confusion were singularly blended together; the chastened spirit of piety and zeal for the church was mingled with the flame of religious freedom and jealousy of ecclesiastical domination; and eagerness for sound doctrine, with a lurking disposition to listen to the (falsely called) *liberal* and innovating spirit, which had sprung up amid the agitations and disturbances of the revolution. The conservative principles of the Church, however prevailed; the proposed alterations in the liturgy were few and not essential,—not impugning its doctrinal articles;—but chiefly of a local description and agreeing mainly with what was generally known among Episcopalians as '*The proposed Book.*'

Soon after the peace, a delegate was chosen to attend a Convention to be holden at Boston 7th Sept. 1785, 'for the purpose of deliberating upon some plan of maintaining uniformity in divine worship.' The Hon Tristram Dalton was chosen; to whom extensive instructions were given as to the measures to be pursued and the objects to be accomplished. On the 18th of the same month, the doings of this Convention were reported to a full meeting, acted on by paragraphs and unanimously adopted.

A General Convention of the Episcopal Church having been summoned to meet at Philadelphia, Sept. 1789; serious apprehensions were entertained by influential members of this congregation, at a rumour of an attempt about to be made by the churches of the Middle and Southern States, to elect and set a Bishop over the church in Mass.& N. Hampshire. Their fears however proved groundless; but they led, at the time, to an address to these States and Rh. Island, inviting the churches to unite in the choice of Lay deputies, to meet at Salem for consultation. The object to be proposed was, to choose one or more Lay deputies to represent them in the Gen. Convention to 'be holden at Philadelphia on 29th Sept. next'; with instructions as to their proceedings. The part taken by Dr. Bass on these points does not appear, but it is manifest, that from some unknown cause, jealousy of the views and designs of the Clergy had been excited; but it did not spread far, nor continue long. The proposition was favourably met by neither of the churches written to, except Holderness, N. H. In declining the proposed meeting they expressed entire confidence in the views of the clergy. The meeting, of course, was not hold-

en: but at a subsequent meeting of the proprietors of St. Paul's, votes were passed 'denying the power of any ecclesiastical body to bind the churches, unless represented by the Laity, as well as Clergy;—and as Dr Parker of Trinity Church, Boston, had been chosen to represent the Church in Mass. and N. H., yet he could act *only* for the Clergy:—two lay delegates ought therefore to be appointed. Wherefore, Voted, that this congregation proceed to elect two Delegates to represent the Laity of this church at the said Convention.*—The Hon. T. Dalton and Hon. Elbridge Gerry were unanimously chosen; to whom copious and explicit instructions were given and signed by the Committee.

The Convention of Mass. met at Salem on the fifth October 1790 to consider the doings of the late General Convention, to prepare a Constitution for Mass. and to act on any other matters that might be thought expedient. Hon. T. Dalton and D. A. Tyng, Esq. were chosen delegates. The Ecclesiastical Constitution of Mass. was adopted by this Church Jan. 16th 1791, and the same delegates, with Hon. Jona. Jackson and Mr Lewis Jenkins were a Committee to ratify the same, at the next Convention in Boston on the last Tuesday of January current.

The Ecclesiastical Constitution of Mass. having been thus warily considered, was finally adopted by all the Churches, and the Church of the U. S. thus became completely organized. All difficulties being settled and jealousies removed, the affairs of this church proceeded with great harmony; and Mr B. continued, until the close of life, in the discharge of his parochial duties. His amiable disposition, unassuming manners and catholic views endeared him to his parishioners, and secured the respect and esteem of all denominations. To uncommon equanimity of temper it was probably owing, that he was enabled to pass undisturbed through scenes, unusually vexatious and embarrassing; and to look, with composure, on the fierce conflicts of theological and political warfare.† There was a dryness and piquancy in his wit, which, though it might occasionally wound, never offended; and many of his pointed and pithy remarks are preserved and repeated at this day. He was grave, courteous and gentlemanly in his manners, dignified in his person, and in every respect the excellent pattern of a parish-priest. He was ever the welcome guest at the fire-side, free and familiar with all classes,—soothing the griefs of the afflicted, easy of access to all and able in counsel to

*Gen. Convention at Philad. Sept. 29, 1789.

†During a certain periodical excitement among other denominations, when asked his opinion as to the result, he made no other reply, than that of puffing large volumes of *smoke*, from a pipe he happened to be then smoking.

those who were in trouble. If there was any supposed deficiency in ar-
dour and enterprize, it was amply compensated by soundness of judg-
ment and promptness and decision in action. As a preacher, he was
grave, evangelical and practical; never aiming at those flights and flour-
ishes of pulpit oratory, by which the multitude are dazzled; but deliv-
ered plain truth in a plain manner. The unusual attachment of his
flock to their Pastor was to the virtues and real worth of the 'Man of God,'
rather than to any external graces or showy embellishments of the public
Speaker. This attachment continued unabated, through a long protracted
period of usefulness to the church and to the community.

In the year 1754, he married Miss Sarah Beck, who died without chil-
dren in May 1789. Afterward he married Miss Mercy Philips, who sur-
vived him and is still living at the age of eighty-three years. By his tem-
perate and regular mode of living, his health and usefulness were unim-
paired to an unusually advanced age. During a few of the last years of his
life, he suffered from occasional attacks of the gout; by one of which he
was suddenly removed, on the tenth of Sept. 1803 in the seventy-sixth year
of his age and the fifty-first of his ministry. On the thirteenth his re-
mains were interred in the church-yard; — the Rev. Dr Parker, of Boston,
preached on the occasion and performed the burial service in presence of
the largest assembly ever witnessed on a similar occasion in this place. —
A handsome marble monument, as a testimony of their respect, was soon
after erected over his grave by his affectionate parishioners. During the
week previous to his decease, he preached the first annual discourse be-
fore the Humane Society of this town and vicinity. On the Lord's day
previous to his death, he appeared to be indisposed; but attended to di-
vine service and preached both parts of the day, prayers being read by
his assistant, who afterward was his successor. He was preparing
to commence a journey to Portland, Me. the week following, to con-
secrate the Church then recently finished; from which he was prevented
by death.

The building, in which we are now assembled, was erected in the year
1800. The corner-stone was laid May,* twenty-second, and the Church
was consecrated on the eighth of October following.

*The Corner-stone was laid with Masonic ceremonies, by the Grand
Lodge of Mass. Divine service was performed by Bishop Bass in the
second Presbyterian Church; thence a procession passed to the site of the
New Church, entering under a triumphal arch, on which was written in
letters of gold, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. Under the Corner-stone were de-
posited a great variety of coins of this and other countries of ancient and
modern date, — several Medals, — a Plate engraved in Hebrew and Ma-
sonic characters, and another on which was the following inscription, —
The Corner-stone of St. Paul's Church, Newburyport, (founded A. D.
1738) was laid by the Rev. Bro. Edward Bass, Bishop of Mass. and Rector
of this Church, — assisted by M. W. S. Dunn, Esq. &c.: on the Feast
of the holy Ascension, in the year of Grace M.D.CCC. and of the United
States, XXIV.

On this occasion an Address was delivered by Rev. Dr Bentley, — a

The Communion Plate, consisting of a Flagon, inscribed on the bottom 'The gift of K. William and Q. Mary to the Reverend Samuel Myles for the use of their Majesties Chappell in New England, 1694. ; a Chalice or silver Cup with the inscription 'Ex dono Johannis Mills 1693.'—another silver Cup, presented by the female communicants of Saint Paul's Church, 1812, and a silver Paten, presented by Hon. D. A. Tyng, Esq. — with a large silver Christening Bason, presented by Capt. Richard Brown,* are in the present keeping and use of the Church.

congregational Minister of Salem; from which the following extract will be interesting—

'Not a century has passed, since the presence of a dignitary of the English Church, Dean Berkeley, the celebrated Bishop of Cloyne, and the existence of the son of a Bishop, (Burnet) as a Governour, were accompanied with distressing fears. The well-intended zeal of Arch-Bishop Secker was repulsed with all the passion, which belongs to the extreme danger of loosing religious liberty. But our happy Constitution has performed wonders. We rejoice to find the two great causes of our worst apprehensions removed. The power of any Church is only the power, which consent can give it; and the terms of any communion are not indispensable in order to possess civil privileges. Generous were the early efforts of this town† to prevent oppression in any form, when its first Pastors opened wide the doors of the Church, because through them every man was obliged to pass to his Rights as a Freeman.

How happy is it, on the same ground to remember, that from all Protestant and reformed communions, we are assembled to assist a PRIMITIVE BISHOP in the foundation of a Church, whose communion can no longer provoke a fear, and which was '*the glory of the Reformation.*' * * * Nor can we refuse to see in favourable attitudes the disposition which the Communion of the English Church has discovered in these United States. — We turn to the Constitution of Virginia. We find a Church possessing, unrivalled, every advantage for the exclusive establishment of its Communion, — refusing this opportunity to assume the power to oppress. — It boldly disclaimed all pretensions; it made the offers of equal liberty, before any sect came to claim the blessing. It did not exclude even Catholics from the highest offices of State. Happy it would be if Massachusetts could **make the same declaration!**"

† Mr Lechford, who was in the Colony 1641, says, some Churches are of opinion, that any may be admitted to Church-fellowship that are not extremely ignorant or scandalous, but this they are not very forward to practice, except at *Newbury*. In this Church Mr Noyes is Pastor and Mr Parker, Teacher.

Those, who wish to examine the whole matter, are referred to a work entitled '*The temple measured,*' by James Noyes, Pastor of Newbury, N. Eng. Lon. 1647, pp 95. sm. Quarto.

*Capt. R. B. was a native of England — came from the W. Indies to this town, married a Miss Hudson and died Feb. 26, aged 43. Capt Daniel Marquand married his Widow, from whom are the descendants of that name and one family of Jenkins. He was interred in the burying ground on the Plains.

The only record of plate belonging to this church, is contained in the following vote — 'Voted also to address and solicit the Governour to grant the plate given by his Majesty for the use of said Church' — April 1, 1771.

A present of \$333.33, was made by the late Timothy Dexter, Esq. for the finishing and ornamenting of the Church; of which a memorial is kept in a gilt frame, in the Vestry. The room, added to the Church and used for Sunday School, Vestry meetings and lectures, was opened Jan. 1832. — The Organ in present use was built in this town, and first used on Christmas, 1833. Mr Daniel Bayley is believed to have been the first Clerk.* He was a zealous churchman; had the care, at times, of the organ and the music, — collected the taxes and in many ways rendered himself highly useful and respected. The office of Clerk has for several years been discontinued; — but several of his posterity have inherited his attachment and still continue in the discharge of similar useful and honourable employments.

The present Incumbent of this Parish, being the fifth in succession of the Episcopal Clergy, was admitted to the order of Deacons by Bishop Bass in July 1803, — in November, he was invited to the Rectorship, and in July of the year following received Priest's orders from Bishop Moore of New-York. Within the period of thirty-four years, since he first commenced the office of the ministry here, (which is the place of his nativity, where he first entered on the sacred office, and to which his ministrations have been chiefly confined,) there have been 891 persons baptized, 191 have received the holy Rite of Confirmation; 146 couple have been connected in marriage, and 404 have been consigned to the grave, the final house of all living. The number of communicants at that time was about 30, the present number is nearly 100. Twenty-two children usually attended the catechisings; the present attendants at Sunday school are about 70. None, who have regularly attended the catechetical instructions of the Church, have been charged with flagrant offences; — none are recollected to have suffered a criminal prosecution; while a considerable number have given decided evidence of vital piety. The result, on the whole, has been highly auspicious; and we look abroad with delight on many shining ornaments of both sexes, which, either in private families, in the Church or in the more common departments of Society, are filling stations of usefulness and honour. Could they have been permitted to have been present on this occasion, the sight would have inspired lively gratitude and joy at the success, with which our humble efforts have been crowned. From this nursery, it affords unfeigned pleasure to observe, that ten persons within thirty years, have entered the ministry of the Church; six others may be added, who proceeded from the vicinity and were partially connected with it; and there are a few besides, now preparing themselves for the same profession.

The number of families, belonging to this Church may be estimated at

* His successors in office were Messrs. Thomas Tannatt, Enoch Sanborn, Andrew Lackey, Robert Hervev, Joseph Morss.

The first interment in the Church Yard was that of a child of Ambrose Davis, July 17, 1742, aged seventeen months.

about one hundred and twenty ; which is larger than that of any preceding period, of which there is any authentic account. The principal losses have been incurred by death, or removal from the town. The influence of the discipline, doctrines and liturgy of the Episcopal Church, — after candid examination, has been sufficient to secure permanent attachment. After having been safely conducted by its guidance through the extremes of speculative error and fanatical delusion, the retrospect inspires them with gratitude, and with fresh resolution to persevere to the end : and having persevered ‘through evil report and good report,’ they feel justified at the bar of conscience, and gratified with the favourable suffrage of those, who once condemned them for ‘not running to the same excess’ with themselves. — There has been in this congregation a prevailing harmony and unanimity. Private dissensions have seldom been suffered to interrupt public peace : and if the evidence of righteousness and peace, — a disposition to do good,* to fear God and keep his commandments, connected with sound doctrine, be deemed conclusive, it will be within the bounds of charity to admit that there has been a general prevalence of religion. In other communions, there has been greater display : — but if humility, enlightened zeal for divine ordinances, and the honour of God’s house, and uniform delight in the holy exercises of the temple, be evidence of the effusions of the Holy Spirit, then we have experienced bright tokens of its refreshing dews and of the fulfillment of the gracious promise made, ‘where two or three are gathered together.’ If we have not partaken largely of that wisdom, where bitter envying and strife are ; we think we have not been destitute of that, which ‘is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits without partiality and without hypocrisy.’ And if we have not been agitated or overwhelmed by the tempest, the thunder or the earthquake, we trust we have not been destitute of, — nor deaf to — **THE STILL SMALL VOICE.**

THE FLOURISHING STATE OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH in the period last mentioned, deserves grateful notice. In the State of Massachusetts, at the beginning of the present century, there were but five or six congregations, that could be considered as in active operation ; and many of these might be regarded as in a feeble, languishing condition. Puritanical prejudice had not subsided ; nor had the Church recovered from the effects of the revolution or the political and polemical feuds and animosities of the succeeding period. Suspicions were harboured of its political connection with the Church of England, and of its design to perpetuate the civil as well as

*The various charitable contributions at the Communion, and Christmas celebrations, during the last thirty years, amount to about \$3,000. — Other Missionary and Easter Collections for destitute churches would probably amount to nearly the same sum. There is a fund, belonging to this Church, called **THE BASS FUND**, in the hands of the Trustees of donations, in Boston ; to which several valuable legacies and donations have been made.

ecclesiastical government of that country. The Episcopal form of government, it was said, was derived from the political;—its design was to favour monarchy; and it was utterly uncongenial with the spirit of republican institutions: than which nothing could be more foreign from the truth;—nor can it be reconciled with true candour to foster such idle prejudices. It is almost too late to give it as new information, but it may not be wholly useless or foreign from our present purpose to declare, that the Episcopal form of church government was derived solely and directly from the sacred scriptures;* that it was the only form, known in the whole christian Church from the days of the Apostles, until the period of the reformation; and is the same with that, which was established by the Apostles of our Lord, under divine direction, and has been transmitted from them in unbroken succession. The Protestant Episcopal Church has been pronounced by celebrated divines of other denominations, ‘the fairest daughter of the reformation’ from popery;—retaining more of the features of the primitive church, than any others of its varied progeny. It was the work of the distinguished Martyrs, Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, Rogers and others, who sealed it with their blood.—But these facts were concealed from the community; no efforts were spared to impress the idea, that the Episcopal Church was a novelty, an innovation on ancient usages, and to excite alarm at its progress as dangerous to freedom. In this case it arose from an almost overwhelming load of prejudice and error. Extraordinary freedom, firmness, moral courage and independence of mind became necessary to espouse its cause.—The idea of its gradual extinction in this country was becoming generally prevalent; and those, who engaged in its ministry, did it at this fearful hazard. They commenced the work; and feeble, as were the means, the Great Head of the Church rendered them successful. The feeble and dispirited congregations increased and multiplied. The number now amounts to about fifty in Mass.; the increase in the U. S. since the close of the revolutionary war, is from about ninety—to upwards of eight hundred. The ratio of its progress for the last ten years has been greatly on

*See ‘Episcopacy tested by scripture’—a small pamphlet rich with varied and conclusive reasoning—by Bishop Onderdonk, of Penn.

It is surprizing, when the scriptures so plainly speak of the order of the Apostles and of presbyter Bishops, and Deacons under them; and when it is admitted, that the same three orders in the ministry were universal in the church, in the third century, and traced by themselves to the Apostles; that it should be contended, that presbyterianism prevailed in the intermediate period!! Where is the proof? Can it be supposed possible, that such a change could have been made within two centuries; and not a note of remonstrance be heard; nor a shadow—or a relic of presbyterianism or independency be left behind?

the increase; and the demand at this day, vastly exceeds the supply of Candidates. It has two Theological Seminaries—one at New York and the other at Alexandria, D. C.; and one College at Hartford; besides other literary Institutions in different parts of the country.

Its doctrines are evangelical and orthodox; its form of discipline or government is Episcopal, and its mode of worship liturgical; being conducted by the use of prescribed forms; in which respect its difference from the prevailing denominations of New England, is chiefly visible where the worship is conducted by extemporaneous forms. They are both forms; but the one is supposed to be offered without premeditation and on the spur of the occasion, sometimes contradictory and perpetually varying;—while the other is precomposed, and carefully adapted to the purpose, in such a way, that all the worshippers may unite, and all the churches, throughout our land, with one voice and one heart, offer the same supplications and the same incense and homage of gratitude and praise. They thus become the Common Prayers of the Church; and as this is but one body, the spouse of Christ, she continually offers the same devotions to her spiritual Head.

The necessity of prescript forms of prayer, in *social worship*, is daily becoming more obvious and generally felt and acknowledged. That the language and subjects of prayer and praise should be previously known and understood by all who are to join in them, is one of the most obvious dictates of reason. If public worship really constitutes one of the main, characteristic features of the christian dispensation, and one of the most essential duties of its professors;—a liturgy or common form, by which this worship is to be performed or expressed, seems to be an integral part, and an indispensable appendage of the system. Thus, in the ancient history of the church, we read, as a matter of course, of its 'Common Prayers,' 'Constituted Prayers,' and 'Solemn Prayers.' A Church, therefore, without any such 'Solemn Offices' for the Sanctuary, any guides for the devotions of the assembly, or any established forms, through which the united aspirations may ascend to the Divine Head, verges near to an anomaly, if not to a solecism.—Besides, is not the whole subject of forming a liturgy, or framing suitable language for the devotion of a worshipping assembly, an affair of too much solemnity, and fraught with consequences of too much importance in time and eternity, to be entrusted to the momentary feelings and invention of any single individual? Should we be willing to entrust to unpremeditated efforts, matters of any magnitude, which were pending before an earthly tribunal? That offices of devotion for a worshipping assembly should be precomposed and express the united homage of the whole Church, seems, therefore, a truth so plain as

hardly to fail of presenting itself with great force to every one, who is willing to give it attentive consideration.

The lawfulness of forms of prayer can hardly be doubted by those, who consider, that they were in use in our Saviour's day, that He joined in them and gave a form to his disciples. The psalms of David indited by the Holy Spirit, with the Pentateuch, constituted the Prayer-book and liturgy of the Jewish church: and are still used for the same purpose in the christian. There is not a single precedent in the scriptures for the use of extemporaneous prayers, publicly offered in the temple or synagogue. They may have been used in the closet and at the 'corners of the streets'; — but the regular public offices were conducted by prescribed forms.

The liturgy of the Episcopal Church is altogether scriptural and evangelical. It is so general in its expressions, as to allow of all needful diversity of opinion in non-essentials, — 'so comprehensive, that nothing is omitted, which is fitted to be asked in public; and so particular, as to comprize most things, which we would ask in private.' The language is simple, devout and sublime; and by general consent admitted to be unequalled by any modern compositions. A large portion of these forms was used by the universal Church in primitive times; and from that period to the present, they have never ceased to guide the devotions, animate the zeal and cherish the piety of its members. Having endured so long a period, and been tested by such favorable results, it is now too late to think of change; and it would border on impiety, to discard that, which has been consecrated by such remote antiquity, and is so completely imbued with the spirit of christianity. These venerable offices of devotion are entitled to attachment from their tendency to elevate the tone of piety, give dignity and interest to the solemn services of the sanctuary and preserve them from everything light, trifling or degrading. Their effect on the mind and heart is elevating, purifying and salutary. They improve the taste, create a lively and keen relish for the 'beauty of holiness,' inspire a love of order and decency, of harmony and unanimity, and diffuse a spirit of love, peace and joy. They direct the views of the worshipper to Christ, of whose office and dignity they convey the most exalted ideas; — they guard against dependence on human aid, or on our own merits or selfrighteousness, and point to the merits and sacrifice of Christ, as the only ground of hope for pardon and salvation. They clearly present the necessity of regeneration and a change of heart by the influences of the Holy Spirit, — of progressive holiness, and the diligent use of the sacraments, as means of grace and of advancement in the divine life.

During the period, now under review, great changes have taken place

among the denominations of christians around us. The current of religion, which ought ever to flow in a regular and uniform course, has been subjected to all the fluctuations and vicissitudes of the human character. It has had its ebb and flow; it has been tossed and ruffled by periods of agitation produced by human devices and artificial excitement; and its streams have been defiled by the excesses of human passion, the extravagances of overheated zeal and other painful tokens of human infirmity: new men have arisen and disappeared; new measures have made their entrance and exit; and new 'discoveries in theological science' have been exhibited to the dazzled multitude, and like meteors, have vanished:— but the Episcopal Church has pursued 'the even tenor of her way,' without turning to the right hand or to the left, retaining primitive institutions inviolate, and relying wholly on the promises of God for success on his own instituted means of grace. The consequence has been, a uniform effusion of the Holy Spirit on the preached word, a steady and silent descent of the refreshing dews of Heaven, a regular increase of its members and a succession of devout communicants, who by the good fruits of faith and repentance, have attested their sincerity and adorned their profession. There is no opposition on the part of the Church to the progress of real knowledge. 'New discoveries in theological science' will be embraced, when they have been weighed in the balance of the sanctuary and not found wanting. Nor is she sectarian or exclusive in her creeds or customs. She invites to her communion 'all such as are religiously and devoutly disposed'; and excludes none, but the unenlightened, the unbaptized and the unholy. The validity of her ordination and ordinances is disputed by no enlightened body of Protestants; and her whole ritual is the pure work of the Reformation, retaining the usages of the first three centuries, and discarding only the additions of popish origin. Thus it 'stands on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone.'

Let this review of the past excite us to renewed efforts to transmit unimpaired to posterity the invaluable legacy, inherited from our fathers; and let us never relinquish without a severe struggle, that, which they embraced and defended at such sacrifice of fortune and fame. Let churchmen be true to themselves and to the cause of their Master, and evince the genial effects of their principles, by scrupulous regard to the cause of truth, respect for religious institutions and anxious concern for the salvation of souls. Avoiding feuds and animosities, let them be of 'one heart and one mind; keeping the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace; knowing that there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God and Father of us all.' Let them remember that partial success is not complete victory; the struggle is not yet ended: the adversary is busy,

'because he hath but a short time.' His motto is, 'Divide and conquer'; but call to mind the caution of our Divine Head, 'a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand'; — and the self answering question of St. Paul, when reasoning on the same subject, 'Is Christ divided?' Is the church composed of divided bodies or disjoined members? Are differences and diversities of opinions and practices conducive to its prosperity? If not; but if they have a contrary effect, and are at direct variance with the first principles of the Church of Christ, then beware of sects — of divisions, of schism, of every thing indeed, that tends to alienate the affections, produce separation, strife and discord, and banish that peace, harmony and unity, which are so essential to the progress of piety and the stability of our times.

It is our high privilege to have received the doctrines of our faith, drawn from the fountain of holy scripture; by men distinguished for learning and piety, who were not led by the vain pursuit of novelties; but sought for the old paths of primitive truth and simplicity; who were not disposed to spin ingenious systems, nor lay undue stress on hair-breadth distinctions, nor mystify the plain truths of the gospel or envelope them in metaphysical subtleties; but were satisfied with those few, simple truths, which had prevailed, from the beginning, and were received in every part of the christian world*; and adopted a creed, so comprehensive as to embrace all reasonable diversities, provided the fundamentals were retained. We have reason to bless God, that this great work was accomplished, before the minds of christians had been clouded and confused by the endless schemes, that have been devised, and sophisticated by the love of triumph in defending them; and that the truth was clearly elicited and placed in bold relief in the offices of the Church, before the dreamy notions of new discoveries in a region, hitherto unexplored, had set the inventions of men on the rack, and laid the scriptures on the wheel of torture. It is a subject of fervent gratitude, that deep questions are not now to be argued before private christians; — that the laity are not required to wade through unfathomable controversies, in search of truth; but may drink it from the pure font of the Church and the word of God; and may stand aloof from the polemic battle-ground, by which this portion of the christian world is convulsed; and which, unless the destroying Angel be commanded to put up his sword, must terminate in the prevalence of irreligion and infidelity. Let us be thankful, likewise, that the sacred volume is copiously presented on every Lord's day, that its leading doctrines are incorporated in the liturgy and offices of the Church; and that we are permitted to drink freely of the unadulterated streams—even of

'Siloa's brook,'

'That flowed fast by the oracle of God.

*'Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus.'

One advantage more, which should not pass unnoticed in this brief sketch of blessings, is the principle of equality among all ranks and degrees of men, recognized in every part of the liturgy and offices of church. All men are regarded, as standing on a level; worshipping in one uniform language, and enjoying the privilege of its rites, on the same condition. It has not one set of requirements for the rich and another for the poor; one form of prayer for the learned and another for the ignorant; nor does it provide for a flourish of compliments to the wealthy or powerful, who may be accidentally present; but the same language is familiar to all classes; being alike intelligible to all and equally edifying to the most lofty and the most simple understanding. It considers all alike, as sinners, needing repentance, confession and pardon; all, alike pensioners on the bounty of God; needing salvation by the merits of one and the same Saviour, and requiring to be fed by his body; — and all, as disciples of the same Master and children of the same Parent. 'The high and the low, the rich and the poor meet together, and the Lord is the Maker of them all.' It thus 'humbles the pride of the lofty and exalts them of low degree,' and gives to each a just idea of his condition and duty; while it continually directs his eye to that state, where worldly distinctions are unknown, and where the deepest humility will be the most highly exalted.

WARDENS OF QUEEN ANN'S CHAPEL FROM 1714.

Abraham Merrill,	Joseph Annis,	John Crocker,
Joshua Brown,	Daniel Coffin,	Seth Atkinson,
Abiel Long,	Samuel Bartlet,	Ichabod Atkinson,
James Freese,	John Bartlet,	Ehud Bartlet,
John Corney,	Daniel Coffin,	Joshua Lunt,
Israel Sawyer,	Daniel Coffin,	Moses Sawyer,
John Bailey,	Joseph Atkins,	James Bailey,
John Merrill,	Josiah Sawyer,	Benjamin Long,
Skipper Lunt,	John Bartlet, Jr.,	Thomas Bartlet,
Peter Merrill,	George Worthen,	Joseph Long.
Benjamin Long, Jr.,	Joseph Whitmore,	

VESTRYMEN FROM 1714.

Samuel Sawyer,	John Bartlet,	Joseph Bayley.
Abiel Long,	Richard Bartlet,	Thomas Brown,

At a meeting on the 6th April, 1716, it was agreed, that all the members of the Church shall be concerned in the Vestry.

1728.

John Bartlet,
Capt. Corney,
Thos. Bartlet.

Mr. Annis,
Mr. Merrill,

Mr. Brown,
Mr. Lunt,

1729.

Josiah Sawyer,

Benj. Long,

Mr. Ayres.

Vestry probably as before, until 1734.

Joseph Atkins, Esq.,
Mr. John Bayley,

Mr. Josiah Sawyer,
Mr. Ayres,

Mr. Joseph Annis,
Mr. Peter Merrill.

1737.

Mr. Annis,
Mr. Huse,

Mr. Bayley,
Mr. Seth Bartlet,

Mr. Peryl,
Mr. David Coffin.

1739.

J. Atkins, Esq.

Mr. John Bayley,
Mr. Daniel Coffin,

Mr. Thos. Bartlet,
Mr. Josiah Sawyer, Jr.

The following persons were chosen Vestrymen, at subsequent periods.

Moses Little,
Benjamin Long,
Ephraim Weed,
Isaac Weed.

Ebenezer Wise,
Joshua Lunt,
Joseph Long,

James Bailey,
Stephen Rogers, Jr.,
Tristram Coffin,

Wardens of St. Paul's—from 1745 to 1837.

Daniel Marquand,
Anthony Gwynn,
Thomas Tannatt,
John Crocker,
William Atkins,
Thomas Woodbridge,
William Jaques,
Ambrose Davis,
Joseph Cottle,
William Jenkins,
Dudley Atkins,
Michael Dalton,
Robert Roberts,
Joseph Atkins,

Tristram Dalton,
Asa Porter,
Robert Jenkins,
Benj. Balch,
John Jenkins,
John Tracy,
Nicholas Tracy,
William Morland,
William Savage,
George Jenkins,
Joseph Cutler,
John Vinal,
Thomas Thomas,
David Cutler,

Edward Rand,
Rufus King,
Lewis Jenkins,
Samuel Cutler,
Dudley A. Tyng,
Tristram Coffin,
Samuel A. Otis,
William Woart,
James Prince,
George Jenkins, Jr.,
John Dean,
Simeon Wade,
George Titcomb.

Vestrymen to 1817.—Those names are here omitted which had served as Wardens.

Edmand Cottle,
Joseph Cottle,
James Simmons,
Witter Cummings,
Patrick Tracy,
Benjamin Harris,
Godfrey Smith,
Benjamin Crocker,
John Tarbox,

Joseph Choate,
George Deblois,
Joseph Marquand,
Abraham Gallishan,
Joseph Ingersoll,
Thomas Thomas,
Joseph Cutler,
Thomas Jones,

Wyatt St. Barbe,
Abraham Jackson,
John Fletcher,
Jonathan Jackson,
William Faris,
Edward Bass,
George Connell,
Isaac Adams.



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